

THE PLACE AND ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17188575>

Nodira Mukhammadieva

*Researcher, Department of Social Work,
National University of Uzbekistan*

Abstract

The article discusses the features of the professional activity of a social worker in the system of comprehensive support for children with disabilities. It shows that social workers act as key intermediaries between children with disabilities, their families, social institutions, as well as state and non-governmental social protection organizations. Particular attention is paid to the functions of the specialist – coordination of interdepartmental interaction, assistance in the realisation of the rights and interests of the child, organization of social support for the family, and the creation of conditions for inclusion in the educational environment. The principles of social support in social work are analysed.

Keywords

social work, social workers, people with disabilities, disability, social protection, model, adaptation, support, rights. social support, adults, local government bodies (mahalla), assessment stage, children with disabilities.

Modern approaches to organizing social protection and support for children with disabilities in the education system are based on interdisciplinary cooperation, comprehensiveness and individualization. In recent years, considerable experience has been gained in social work with vulnerable groups, in particular with people with disabilities.

"Social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline that contributes to social change and development, the resolution of problems in human relations, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people for the purpose of improving their well-being [1]. 'Social work as a social phenomenon in the broad sense of the word is a unique model of social assistance that society implements in a specific historical period, in accordance with the characteristics of social, political and cultural development' [2,5]. Social work is a field in which the profession requires cooperation with other specialities in the provision of services, especially in relation to people with disabilities, where different professions work

together, interacting with each other from the diagnosis stage to accessing services and closing the case.

According to Professor M.H.Ganieva, the work of social workers is connected 'not only with providing assistance, material and moral support..., but also with providing social therapy at the individual, family and societal levels, aimed at social adaptation' [3,42]. Social workers must possess 'high moral and ethical standards that prevent them from succumbing to the temptation to manipulate people for selfish purposes' [4]. "Social work is a unique form of social policy implementation, and social policy is the backbone and guiding principle of social work. On the difficult path to forming a legal, civil society, it is necessary to form and develop a new type of activity for our country and to train professional social workers" [5,41]. 'Social workers and social service workers also provide a wide range of services, which include direct and indirect practice, as well as clinical and preclinical interventions' [6,17].

Particular attention is paid to an analysis of the problems of rehabilitation and adaptation of children with disabilities. According to the law, 'a social worker is a person who has the necessary professional skills and qualifications, organizing the provision of social services or directly providing social services' [7]. A social work specialist 'is considered a universal specialist, as they have special professional training and possess basic knowledge and skills related to many of these professions' [8,129]. Social workers not only act as intermediaries, but also actively participate in diagnosing the social status of children. In this context, the role of the social worker becomes an integral part of the comprehensive support model, as one of the main participants in the support system, providing a link between the educational institution, the family, medical and social services, as well as in the development and implementation of individual support programmes.

The primary responsibility of social workers is to promote the well-being of clients, particularly vulnerable groups. Social work professionals are trained to create and strengthen support and assistance structures, which include providing services that 'benefit vulnerable groups and society through their "person-in-environment" concept, based on strengths theory' [9] and other social work theories. Social work is both interdisciplinary and also transdisciplinary and draws on a wide range of scientific theories.

The Social Worker's Code of Ethics focuses on competencies: 'Social workers should provide services in essential areas or use new intervention methods or approaches only after appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision by people who are competent in these interventions or methods' [10].

With the aim of fully ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of citizens in the field of social protection, radically improving the quality of social services provided and introducing a fundamentally new management system that meets modern international standards... the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan [11] was established, which defined the basic rights and obligations of social workers in the Republic of Uzbekistan, in particular:

- providing social services and assistance to persons in need of social protection within their competence;
- ensuring equal access to social services, promoting social justice in public relations and eliminating social inequality;
- taking into account cultural values and traditions when assessing the needs of families and individuals in the context of social work and drawing up individual plans for the provision of services and assistance [12].

In accordance with the paradigm of 'Involving people and structures in solving life problems and improving well-being'[13], social workers use a range of skills, techniques, strategies, principles and activities at various levels of the social system – macro-, meso- and microsystems – aimed at maintaining the system or changing it.

Social work specialists in social support are multifaceted, involving client adaptation, social assistance, consulting, and facilitation. With regard to children with disabilities, social work is an important factor in the positive dynamics of their development. It is carried out using various methods and technologies to support, find the necessary resources and maintain an active lifestyle not only for children with disabilities, but also for their families and social environment, contributing to their self-realisation.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: From 2023, social service and assistance Centers run by groups of social workers called 'Inson' will be introduced under the National Agency for Social Protection. The initial plan was to introduce them in 28 districts [14]. These Centers provide professional social services based on a competency-based approach at the Local government bodies (mahalla) level to vulnerable groups of the population who find themselves in difficult life situations. Social workers are tasked with helping clients adapt, supporting them and helping them overcome their difficult life situations.

The main functional responsibilities of social workers are "in the area of developing and organising a plan for the provision of social services and assistance on an individual basis to persons in need of social protection:

- organization of emergency care in difficult cases;

- based on the results of the assessment, drawing up an operational, short-term and long-term individual plan for social services;
- organization of the provision of social services and assistance in accordance with an individual plan of social services and assistance;
- making appropriate changes to the individual social service and assistance plan; involving or referring specialists from the relevant competent authorities, depending on the content of the services specified in the plan" [15].

In our opinion, individual planning of social services provides a targeted approach to vulnerable groups, which makes it possible to respond promptly to emergency situations, adapt support measures according to needs and effectively coordinate the actions of competent authorities for comprehensive assistance.

In the area of studying the situation of each family (families), assessing the situation in families and their need for social services and assistance:

"determines whether an applicant or an identified person needs social protection through an initial assessment" [16];

"identifies, analyzes and establishes the risk level of risk factors that negatively affect the life of a socially vulnerable person through an initial assessment" [17];

"identifies personal qualities, strengths, knowledge and skills that can improve the quality of life of a socially vulnerable person; analyses the social status, needs and available opportunities of a person in need of social protection" [18];

opens "social work" (cases) based on the application of a person in need of social protection. Studies the social status and needs of socially vulnerable persons in the field [19].

In this case, a comprehensive study of the family's situation and social protection needs allows for the timely identification of risks, assessment of vulnerability, determination of a person's resources and capabilities, and the opening of cases for further support. Effective coordination and interagency cooperation ensure targeted assistance.

From this point of view, social support can be considered as a form of social service, social technology and social service. Social services are a set of support services in an organization, services provided by interdepartmental organizations, and the contribution and responsibility of the client. As a technology, social support is a method focused on the organization and coordination of assistance and services for the client. This process includes the collection and analysis of information, as well as the development of social support strategies and tactics.

In the context of social services, social support can be one of the components of a social service complex of legal, economic, psychological, educational, medical, rehabilitation and other measures to assist a person in need of services.

Social support includes components that develop the abilities and skills of social service recipients, helping clients improve their social status.

Social support objectives

- Helping clients adapt to real-life conditions
- Rehabilitating and removing clients and TJS
- Improving clients' social status
- Normalization of relationships and self-affirmation in society
- Restoring health and getting rid of bad habits
- Creating conditions for the client's self-realization in the family and society.

The main tasks of social support are adaptation – rehabilitation of vulnerable groups, restoration and normalization of health and other activities.

According to researcher L.M.Shipitsina, the main task of support is to create psychological and pedagogical conditions for the full development and formation of the personality, as well as to protect the rights of children with disabilities to receive education in accordance with their characteristics and abilities. In her opinion, the teaching staff of an educational institution will be much more effective in providing support if parents are involved [20,115].

At the same time, the principles of social support in social work are based on the following approaches:

Client-oriented – the support process is built taking into account the individual needs of the client in communication and the continuous improvement of the quality of interaction.

Family-oriented – this approach focuses not only on the client (e.g., a child with a disability, an elderly person, etc.), but also on their entire family as a system, taking into account its resources, difficulties and needs.

Systemic – a systemic approach to support is one that involves considering the client or their situation within a system, including all interrelated elements and influences. In the context of social work, this means that it is important to consider not only the individual needs of the client, but also their environment, resources, limitations and interactions with other people or institutions.

Interdisciplinary – an interdisciplinary approach to support is one that involves collaboration between specialists from different fields of knowledge and practice to provide comprehensive support to the client.

Coordination of social support – coordination of social support is the process of organizing and coordinating the actions of various specialists and organizations that provide assistance to a client within the framework of social support.

Client motivation and engagement – client motivation and engagement in social support are key components that help to create active cooperation between

the client and specialists, ensuring the effective resolution of social issues. Motivation aims to inspire the client to change and participate in the assistance process, while engagement aims to maintain their activity and responsibility throughout the support process.

Resource approach – the resource approach in social support is a method of work in which the emphasis is on identifying and using existing resources of the client, his environment and the social environment to solve his problems. Within this approach, attention is focused not on problems, but on those forces, opportunities and support that can help the client overcome difficulties and improve the quality of life.

Methods, techniques, and forms of working with clients – consulting – providing information and advice on topics related to rights, responsibilities, social assistance, etc.

Diagnosis is an assessment of the client's needs, his social situation, psycho-emotional well-being and abilities for further work of individual plans for the client, which outlines the stages for improving the situation, achieving goals and using resources.

Social support approaches in social work play a key role in supporting clients, as they are aimed at comprehensively solving their problems and improving their quality of life. Analysis has shown that each approach provides support at different levels, taking into account the individual needs, capabilities, and resources of the client. The use of a variety of methods and techniques allows us to work with clients, taking into account their social, psychological and practical needs. Ultimately, the effectiveness of social support depends on how correctly the approach is chosen, as well as the interaction of all participants in the process.

A social support specialist helps clients understand their situation and identify the most important problems and possible ways to solve them.

The program of accompanying a child with a disability is carried out in 4 stages:

The motivational stage (collecting the necessary information about the child) is the creation of favorable conditions for the implementation of the process of support and motivation for upcoming activities. For children with disabilities, it is necessary to ensure a favorable psycho-emotional relationship between adults and children. At this stage, the effective work of specialists and their personal and professional qualities play a special role. The child must be successfully socialized and all conditions must be created for the formation of the personality of a child with a disability. The situation and needs are being assessed.

The preparatory stage (analysis of the information received, planning of goals) involves determining the content of support for the family and the child, selecting the optimal approaches to educational activities, distributing functional responsibilities among the support participants, and monitoring the child's characteristics. At this stage, a concept for psychological and pedagogical support is developed. The following forms are implemented: selection of methods and techniques for supporting the child, consideration of the child's family needs, consideration of the requirements for the family's micro-social environment. At this stage, it is necessary to involve the family in educational programmes. Counselling of all participants in the support and educational process on ways and means of solving the child's problems.

The main stage (providing assistance and resources) involves developing comprehensive individual corrective and developmental programs based on diagnostic results. All participants in the educational process interact within the framework of pedagogical support. At this stage, the provision of expertise services by the Republican Inspectorate of Medical and Social Expertise [21]. Control over the implementation of the plan and monitoring of progress – tracking the effectiveness of work, adjusting actions – regular meetings with the client, monitoring the implementation of the plan and the achievement of intermediate goals, making changes depending on difficulties.

Assessment stage (analysis of results) – psychological and pedagogical monitoring, analysis of results by all specialists involved in the educational process. Evaluation of results and completion of support – final assessment of the results achieved and completion of support.

Post-support – planning further work with the child based on the results obtained.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan provides for 'the establishment of a mechanism for work at the Local government bodies (mahalla) level to ensure social protection of the population, i.e., based on the general situation of the family, the organization of social assistance and services to help it out of a difficult life situation on the basis of a comprehensive approach' [22]. At present, all the stages and levels of support described above are carried out in the Inson Centres and Local government bodies (mahalla) by social workers. There is currently no social worker position in the state education system.

In our opinion, the stages of social worker support represent an important and multifaceted system that allows not only to solve the client's current problems, but also to work on their long-term adaptation and development. Each interaction with the client should be based on an individual approach, taking into account their

unique needs and situation. In the context of improving the social protection system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan plays a central role in implementing the task of increasing the importance of comprehensive, sustainable and client-oriented forms of assistance to vulnerable groups of the population. This body acts as a coordinating mechanism, providing social support to citizens who find themselves in difficult life situations, including comprehensive needs assessment, interdepartmental coordination, implementation of individual support plans, monitoring and evaluation of support results. At the same time, the importance of professional case management is increasing. Social workers are becoming resource coordinators, mediators and defenders of clients' interests, as well as promoters of inclusive values

REFERENCES:

1. International federation of social worker.
<https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>
2. Ганиева М.Х. Введение в социальную работу. – Ташкент: «Innovatsiya- Ziyο» 2020. – 278 с.
3. Ганиева М.Х. ЮНИСЕФ И Национальный университет Узбекистана: достижения и планы. Журнал “Бола ва Замон”, – Ташкент. – №3, 2018. – С. 42-48. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336530964_Ganieva_MH_UNISEF_i_Nacionalnyj_universitet_Uzbekistana_prodvizenie_socialnoj_raboty [accessed May 16 2025].
4. Алексеева В.С. Профессионализация в социальной работе: сущность, факторы формирования. Ж. Бюллетень науки и практики. 2016. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/professionalizatsiya-v-sotsialnoy-rabote-suschnost-factory-formirovaniya>.
5. Латипова Н.М., Алексеева В.С. Развитие системы социальной защиты детей в Узбекистане. Ж. Социальных исследований. №3. 2022. – С. 31-46. <file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/administrator,+Sociol-2022-3-4.pdf>.
6. Латипова Н. Этические принципы и ценности социальной работы. – Ташкент: Donishniand ziyosi, 2020. – С. 17.
7. Resolution of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Ministry of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 'On the Approval of the Instructions on the Status, Duties, Functions and Qualification Requirements of Social Workers.' [Registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 10 June 2020. Registration №3240. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4856946>. Axrorov Z. O'zbekistonda ijtimoiy hodim kasbinning joriy etilishi, ijtimoiy siyosatning amaliy natijasi sifatida. Ijtimoiy tadqiqotlar jurnali. 1 maxsus son. 2024. – B.129.

8. [Disability and Health](https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/about/index.html). CDC and Disability and Health. APRIL 2, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/about/index.html>.

9. NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards. <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English/Social-Workers-Ethical-Responsibilities-to-Clients>.

10. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On a set of measures to provide quality social services and assistance to the population, as well as to establish a system for their effective control.' Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 01.06.2023, No. UP-82.. <https://lex.uz/docs/6480351>.

11. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uzhttps://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-huquq-va-majburiyatlar/>.

12. International federation of social worker. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>.

13. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On measures to further improve the system of social services and assistance to the population.' Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 28 September 2023, No. PP-319. <https://lex.uz/docs/6624641?ONDATE2=17.07.2024&action=compare>.

14. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-asosiy-funksiyalari/>.

15. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-asosiy-funksiyalari/>.

16. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-asosiy-funksiyalari/>.

17. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-asosiy-funksiyalari/>.

18. National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://ihma.uz/uz/social-work-category/ijtimoiy-xodimning-asosiy-funksiyalari/>.

19. Ульянова Ю.А. Использование ресурсов территориального агентства специального образования в сопровождении семьи и ребенка с ограниченными возможностями здоровья // Материалы всероссийской научно-практ. конф., Самара, март-декабрь 2013г. – Самара: ПГСГА, 2013. – С. 114-119.

20. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan.' Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 25 July 2022, No. UP-175. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>. Chapter 1. General Provisions. Clause 3. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>.

21. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan.' Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 25 July 2022, No. UP-175. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>. Chapter 2. Objectives envisaged within the framework of achieving the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Objective 1. Point a. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>.

22. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On Approval of the Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan.' Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 25 July 2022, No. UP-175. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>. Chapter 1. General Provisions. Clause 3. <https://lex.uz/docs/6130271>.